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RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Managing noncurrent files

FEDERAL RECORDS CENTERS

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

MAR 21 1955

RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOKS are developed
by the National Archives and Records Service as technical
guides to reducing and simplifying Government paperwork.

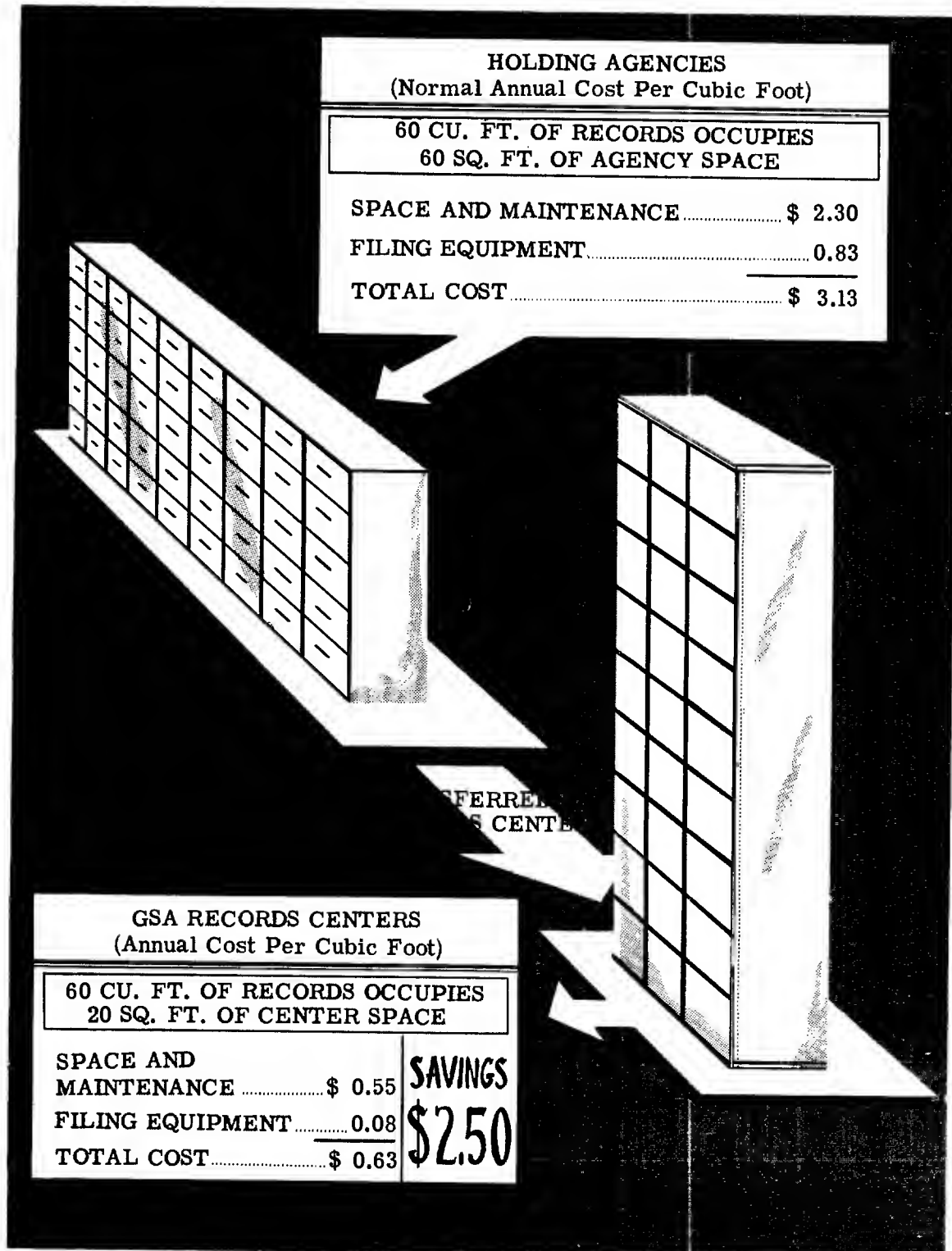
RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOKS:

Managing correspondence: *Form Letters*1954...33 p.
Managing noncurrent files: *Federal Records Centers*.....1954...25 p.

CONTENTS

I.	WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECORDS CENTERS	3
II.	SELECTING FILES FOR TRANSFER	4
III.	INITIATING THE TRANSFER REQUEST	5
IV.	GETTING FILES READY FOR SHIPMENT	6
V.	PREPARING THE TRANSFER FORMS	9
VI.	HOW TO SHIP THE RECORDS	15
VII.	HOW TO GET REFERENCE SERVICE	17
VIII.	DISPOSAL OF RECORDS IN THE CENTERS	19
IX.	THE ST. LOUIS FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER	21
	CHECK LIST	25

FIGURE 1
HOW CENTERS SAVE MONEY



I. WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECORDS CENTERS

The Federal Government is producing records at the rate of 2.9 million cubic feet annually - enough to fill 9,000 four-drawer file cabinets every week in the year.

To handle this accumulation of files economically and efficiently Federal agencies are now required by law to establish and maintain effective records management programs.* Such programs include setting up controls over the creation, organization, maintenance, use, and disposition of records.

One of the major objectives of an agency's records management program is to keep noncurrent records moving out of high-cost space and filing equipment into low-cost records centers as rapidly as possible. Experience in a growing number of agencies proves that at least *one-half* of an agency's records can be moved from high-cost to low-cost space under a continuing and effective records transfer program. An agency can reach this goal, with the resultant benefits in annual savings, by transferring an average of 10 percent of its records to a Center each year.

As the chart on the opposite page shows, files can be kept in low-cost records centers at a saving to the Government of \$2.50 a cubic foot of records. This saving is possible because:

Center storage space costs less. (Compare: \$2.30 a cubic foot average for agency space with 55 cents a cubic foot for center space.)

Center storage equipment costs less. (Compare: \$50 for an agency filing cabinet with 77 cents for 7 cardboard containers plus \$3.90 for shelving.)

Center space is better utilized. (Compare: 3 cubic feet of records in each square foot of space at the center with 1 square foot for each cubic foot in the agency.)

Ten low-cost records centers, a specialized center for personnel records, and several annexes are now being operated by the General Services Administration. Federal agencies are legally authorized to transfer their noncurrent records to these facilities. This handbook tells how your agency can save money, protect its records, and get quick and valuable reference service by using the Federal Records Centers. The steps in transferring records, from initiating the request for transfer to making the final arrangements for shipping, are explained and illustrated on the following pages.

*Federal Records Act of 1950 (41 U. S. C. Supp. 280-290).

II. SELECTING FILES FOR TRANSFER

If the records of an agency are completely covered by General Records Schedules and comprehensive agency schedules, there is no problem in deciding what files to transfer to a Center. Comprehensive records control schedules specify *what* files to transfer and *when* to transfer them.

In an agency which has no specific instructions on transferring, the selection of files for transfer to Federal Records Centers normally is based on three considerations:

1. How often agency personnel actually need to refer to the file;
2. How much longer the files must be kept before they can be destroyed; and
3. How much it will cost to transport the records to the Center.

A criterion has been developed indicating that files which are referred to not more than once a month per file drawer should be transferred to a Center, provided transportation cost does not wipe out space savings.

Files meeting the above criterion usually should be transferred to a Center:

1. Regardless of how few records are involved;
2. Regardless of how urgent the need for the infrequent references; and
3. Regardless of how important or how highly security-classified the records or how extensive the restrictions on their use.

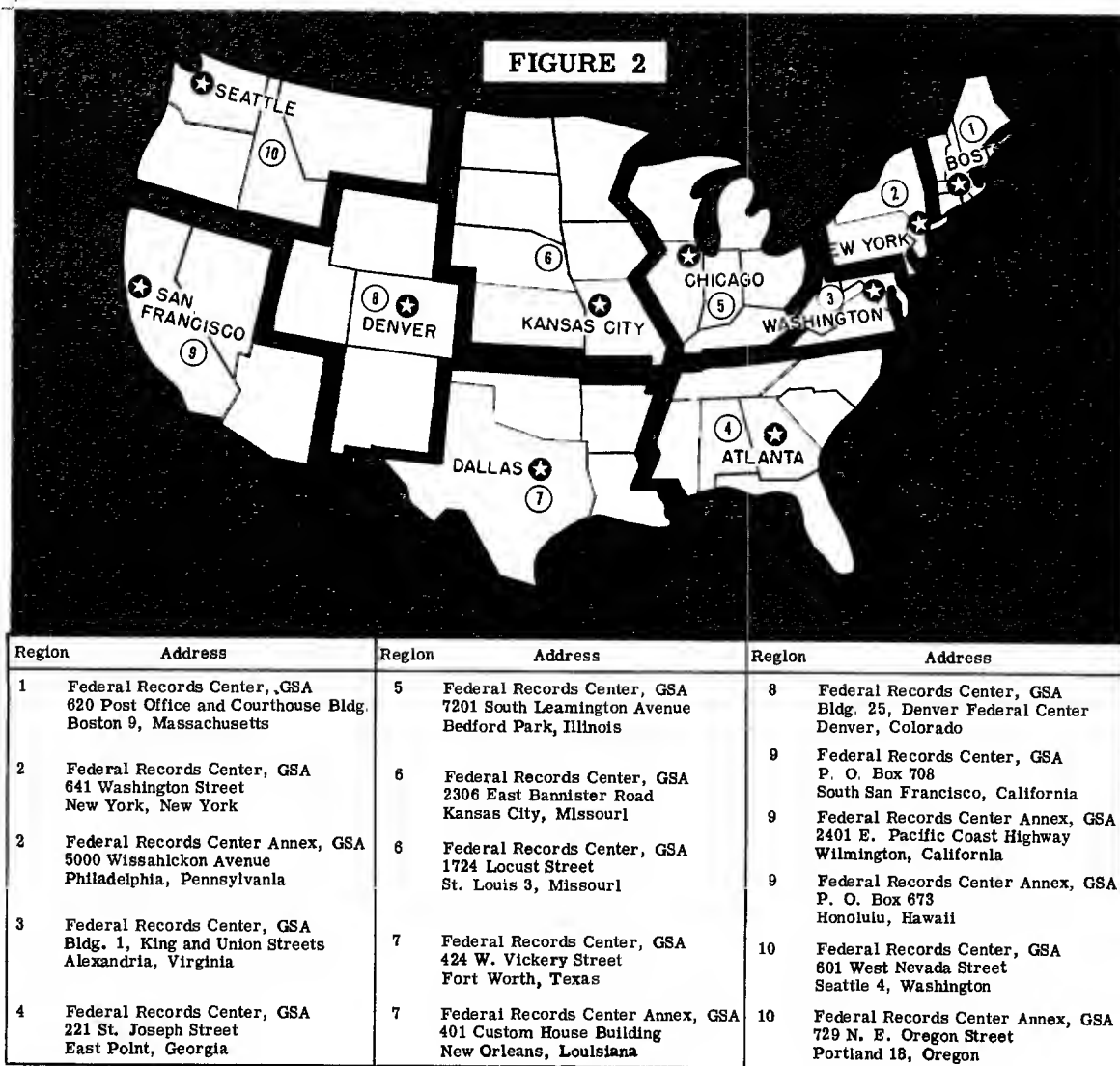
Most records over 4 years old will be referred to less than once a month per file drawer. To distinguish their age, correspondence files should be maintained in blocks, according to calendar or fiscal year. This technique is called "breaking" the files, and simply means that on a given date a new set of files will be established for material dated after that time. Files can be "broken" every year, every two years, or every three years, depending on the rate with which the material gathers. Different colored labels can be used on folder tabs to distinguish one time period from another.

Closed out case files are seldom, if ever, referred to more than once a month per file drawer. Case files are usually closed out when a given event occurs - an employee separates from the Government, a claim is settled, a purchase order is paid, and so on.

Each agency has records officers who are available to inspect files and make recommendations as to transfers. Such recommendations may also be requested from GSA by the agency.

III. INITIATING THE TRANSFER REQUEST

To initiate a transfer of files to a Federal Records Center all an agency official needs to do is inform his records management officer. Under the usual procedure, the records management officer begins the transfer arrangements by telephoning or writing the Chief in charge of the nearest Federal Records Center or Annex. Figure 2 shows the 10 regions in which the General Services Administration operates Federal Records Centers. The mailing addresses of the Centers and Annexes are shown below.



If on the other hand an agency wishes to transfer records from its central office and from its field offices on a nationwide basis, its records management officer deals with the Records Management Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington 25, D. C.

IV. GETTING FILES READY FOR SHIPMENT

Federal Records Center standard cardboard containers are available for use in shipping files to the Records Centers. Unless an agency is being liquidated or urgently requires immediate removal of its records, it should ship records in these standard containers rather than in filing cabinets or similar equipment.

A standard cardboard container has inside dimensions of 15 by 12 by 10 inches and holds 1 cubic foot of records. Thus for each cubic foot of records to be transferred you will need 1 cardboard container.

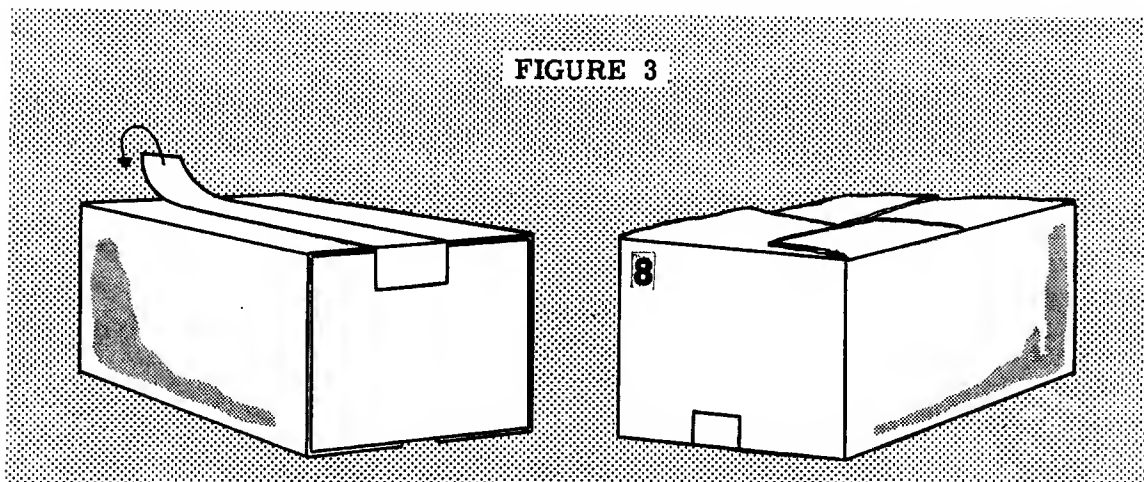
A good rule to follow in estimating the total cubic feet of records is this:

*Count each full letter-size file drawer as 1½ cubic feet of records;
count each full legal-size file drawer as 2 cubic feet of records.*

Standard containers may be obtained either from a Federal Records Center or from the Federal Supply Service (Stock No. 53-B-24992-128). The boxes cost about 11 cents apiece, but the Center usually supplies them without charge to an agency. Requests for boxes should be made far enough in advance to be sure they are on hand when packing is scheduled to begin.

Assembling the boxes. When an agency and a Records Center are located in the same general metropolitan area, the boxes may be delivered already assembled. Otherwise, they are delivered "knocked-down."

To assemble a "knocked-down" box, the bottom must be secured either by gummed kraft tape at least 2 inches wide or by machine-applied heavy-duty stitching. The tape should be placed longitudinally on the outside, after the flaps on both ends of the carton have been folded inside. (See Figure 3.) The tape should extend at least 2 inches up each end of the box for extra strength.



Screening. Before putting files in boxes, it is advisable to screen out all unnecessary nonrecord material and all record material clearly authorized for disposal. This screening usually results in a cost savings and should be omitted only:

1. If the need for the agency space occupied by the records is urgent;
2. If the agency office is being liquidated immediately; or
3. If the labor costs of screening or other cost factors outweigh the savings in transportation and storage costs.

In addition to screening before packing, an agency should downgrade security-classified records whenever such downgrading is warranted by changed circumstances, lapse of time, or other conditions affecting the classification.

Packing the records. Without disturbing the existing filing arrangement, pack the records firmly in the box. Do not force them. To make future reference easier, fairly active files should be packed less tightly than files which are expected to be inactive. Place the file folders in an upright position, with letter-size folders the 12-inch way, and legal-size folders the 15-inch way. The folder labels may then be read while facing either the 12-inch or 15-inch side. Regardless of how the records are packed, the unstitched 12-inch side of the container is considered the front.

Insofar as is practical, records with widely different retention periods should not be placed in the same carton. And records from more than one bureau or office should never be packed in the same carton.

Numbering the boxes. Boxes should be numbered consecutively in heavy black crayon or its equivalent, starting with No. 1 for each transfer. Write the number on the box in the upper left corner of the front or unstitched side. Each transfer will be assigned a separate accession number by Center personnel after the records are received at the Center.

(Container labels showing the contents of each box are optional with the agency. They are not required, because Federal Records Centers use a permanent location number system. Labels are extremely useful at a Center, however, if the files are arranged in name or numerical sequence.)

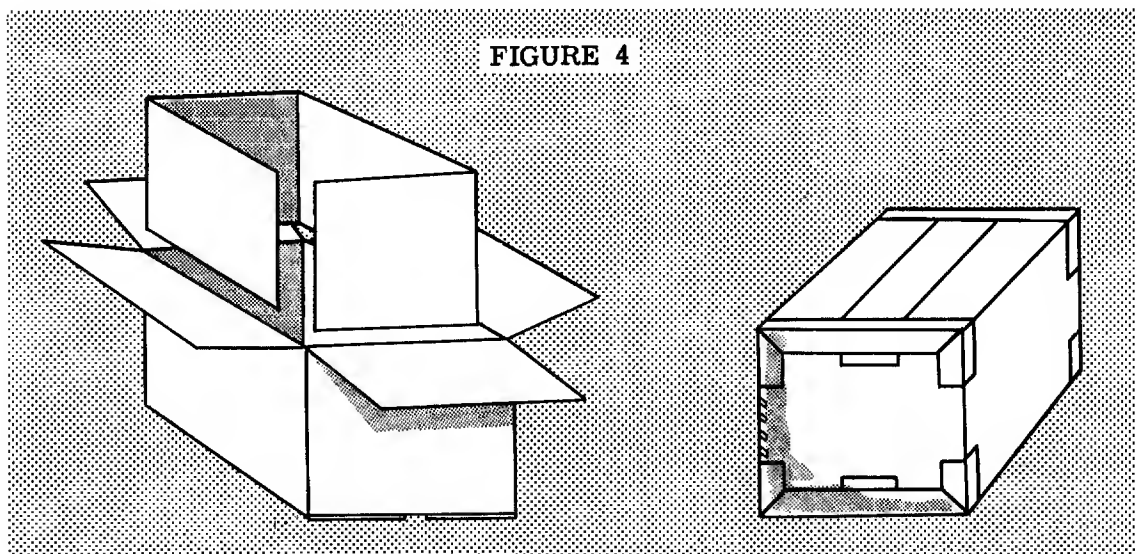
Finding aids. The records should be accompanied, where possible, by any relevant finding aids, such as indexes. The Center should be notified of any finding aids retained by the agency.

Closing the boxes. To close the box, simply tuck the flaps alternately over and under each other. (See Figure 3.)

Reinforcing the cartons. If the boxes are to be shipped to the Records Center by freight, express, or parcel post, it may be desirable to reinforce them. As a general rule, boxes should be reinforced if they will be handled more than four times during shipment, as may happen in freight shipments of less than carload lots.

Two methods of reinforcement are equally satisfactory. The easier method is to place a cardboard liner inside the box before it is packed. By this method the sides of the box may be lined and the bottom and top padded with cardboard. Liners cost about 3 cents each; pads about a penny apiece. (Federal Supply Service Stock Nos. 53-L-2942-975 and 53-P-385 respectively.)

The second reinforcement method is to tape all corners and edges of the boxes, top and bottom, thoroughly and skillfully. In this way it is possible to secure all points where the box may come apart if mishandled during shipment.



Oversized records. Oversized records, such as ledgers and similar volumes, which will not fit into standard containers, should be tied in bundles with sturdy identification tags attached. Each bundle should be handled just as another box in the numbering sequence. The number should be written on the tag, along with any other necessary descriptive data. Just as in the case of cartons, bundles shipped out of the area should be prepared with extra care to protect them against rough handling.

Undersized records. Small records, such as cards or papers 3 by 5 inches, 5 by 8 inches, and 3 by 11 inches, may be shipped in standard cartons, but they should be arranged in small to medium length lots and bound with heavy rubber bands. Arrange them in as many rows as possible, using cardboard pads between layers.

Filing cabinets. As indicated in Part IV, records should be transferred to Centers in filing cabinets in exceptional cases only. In preparing records for shipment in filing cases, press the compressing devices inside each drawer tightly against the records. Then secure the drawers by ropes or metal bands regardless of whether they have locking devices. Finally number the cabinets in consecutive order.

V. PREPARING THE TRANSFER FORMS

The transfer of records to a Federal Records Center requires preparation of two simple forms. These forms serve:

1. To record the transfer of custody of the files to the Federal Records Center subject to any legally binding restrictions on use which an agency may impose; and
2. To provide an accession inventory sufficiently detailed to enable the Center to give an agency any reference service it may need.

The forms, known as Standard Form 134 and Standard Form 135, may be obtained from a Federal Records Center, or from the source that normally supplies your agency with standard forms.

Standard Form 135, Transmittal of Government Records (Figure 5), is the basic transfer document. It should be filled out carefully and in detail. An original and one copy are forwarded to the Center to which the records are being transferred. (Note: When transferring records to the Center in Washington, D. C., the agency should forward an original and two copies.) The Center returns one copy to the agency, signed by a Center official. This copy is the agency's receipt for the transfer.

When records that have been site-audited by the General Accounting Office are being transferred, an additional copy of Standard Form 135 should be prepared and forwarded to the Examination and Settlement Branch, Division of Audits, General Accounting Office, Washington 25, D. C.

Standard Form 134, Records Shelf List (Figure 6), is an accession or box-by-box inventory which enables the Center to provide reference service on the records. It should be prepared with the same number of copies and forwarded in the same manner as Standard Form 135. One copy will be returned to the appropriate agency official with his copy of Standard Form 135.

Standard Form 134 is not necessary when Standard Form 135 can be made to serve as an accession inventory. Standard Form 135 can serve as an accession inventory:

1. When the total volume involved is no more than 10 cubic feet; or
2. When the records are considered so inactive that no further reference demands are anticipated.

When the volume is small, a box-by-box inventory, if necessary, can be included on Standard Form 135 as part of the description of records. When need for reference service is not anticipated, a box-by-box inventory is unnecessary and only the inclusive box numbers for each type of record need be given on Standard Form 135.

STANDARD FORM 135 APRIL 1953 PRESCRIBED BY GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REG. 5-IV-302		DO NOT USE THIS BOX ACCESSION NO. RECORD GROUP NO.							
TRANSMITTAL OF GOVERNMENT RECORDS									
INSTRUCTIONS. —Submit this form to your area GSA regional office. When submitting to GSA region 3 office, Washington, D. C., submit an original and two copies. When submitting to other GSA regional offices, submit an original and one copy only.									
1. FROM (Name and address of agency transferring the records) Bureau of Special Revenue Special Revenue Bldg. Washington 25, D. C.		2. AGENCY WHICH CREATED RECORDS (If different than transferring agency)							
3. AGENCY OFFICIAL AUTHORIZING TRANSFER (Signature) <i>J. S. Smithson</i>		TITLE Administrative Officer	DATE 1-8-53						
4. CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS IN TRANSFERRING AGENCY (Name, address, and telephone number) James Smith, Rm. 1163, Special Revenue Bldg., Code 165 - 87654									
5. DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS (With inclusive dates. Use reverse if additional space is required) Ruling Files and related records of the former Sales Tax Division (1918-Aug. 15, 1952) and former Miscellaneous Tax Division (1941-Aug. 15, 1952). These two divisions were abolished in the bureau reorganization of Aug. 15, 1952. The functions of the divisions were transferred in part to the field offices and in part to a new Excise Tax Ruling Branch. The records document the work of the divisions in issuing interpretative rulings and opinions to the public and to bureau field offices regarding tax regulations and laws. No. 7 -(continued). Sales Tax Claims for Credit (Boxes 503-619) covered by BSR Sched. No. 27, Dec. 15, 1949 - 12 yr. retention.									
6. RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF RECORDS (If no restrictions, write "none") No access to be given other than to Bureau of Special Revenue officials concerned without prior approval of branch officials concerned or their superior officers, for a period of 15 years.									
7. ARE THESE RECORDS COVERED BY AN AUTHORIZED DISPOSAL SCHEDULE? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (If "yes," identify schedule) Only in small part. <input type="checkbox"/> NO (continued under 5 above)		8. CUBIC FEET OF RECORDS TRANSFERRED 1607	9. CUBIC FEET OF RECORDS DISPOSED OF IN AGENCY None						
10. SQUARE FEET OF SPACE RELEASED <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Office</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Storage</td> <td style="width: 34%; text-align: center;">LOCATION</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">300</td> <td style="text-align: center;">510</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Office	Storage	LOCATION	300	510			
Office	Storage	LOCATION							
300	510								
11. FILING EQUIPMENT (Enter, where applicable, quantity of each type):									
		FILING CABINETS							
		STEEL	WOOD						
EMPTIED AND RETAINED AT AGENCY		300							
RECORDS SHIPPED IN									
TO BE RETURNED									
CUBIC FEET OF SHELVING EMPTIED AT AGENCY									
		TRANSFER CASES							
		STEEL	WOOD						
EMPTIED AND RETAINED AT AGENCY									
RECORDS SHIPPED IN									
TO BE RETURNED									
CUBIC FEET OF SHELVING EMPTIED AT AGENCY									
1607 FRC containers									
DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE									
THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED RECORDS WERE RECEIVED SHORTAGES, DAMAGED CONTAINERS, ETC.									
SIGNATURE		TITLE							
FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER ADDRESS		U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-58454-1							

FIGURE 5

Although transfer documentation may be prepared by Center personnel, usually it is better for agency officials to prepare it by use of these standard forms. The documentation may be as varied as common sense dictates. In preparing the descriptions of the records, use any special terminology or information which may make the transfer documents more meaningful for serving your future reference needs.

Most of the entries on Standard Forms 135 and 134 are self-explanatory, but a few require some explanation.

The accession number and the record group number, which distinguish the records of one agency or bureau from all others, are filled in by the Center on both forms.

STANDARD FORM 135, TRANSMITTAL OF GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Description of Records. The description of your records should provide enough information -

1. To clearly identify them;
2. To enable the Center to give reference service on them; and
3. To enable the Center to prepare schedules covering any records not covered by agency or general records control schedules. Such schedules specify which records are of continuing value and how long the other records need to be retained.

Normally, the description given on Standard Form 135 will be general, serving to identify and describe the total group of records being transferred. (Exception: Description should be broken down by individual records series if Standard Form 134 is not used.) The general description should include such information about the records as:

1. Their administrative origins, including past organizational changes when significant and relevant;
2. Their inclusive dates;
3. The purpose for which they were created, their relationship to the program activities of the organization creating or using them, and any other significant purpose or function they may or do serve;
4. Their general content; and
5. Their significant relationships with other records, including duplication.

The order of the information does not matter as long as the description is adequate. Figure 5 illustrates a sample general description.

STANDARD FORM 134
APRIL 1953
PRESCRIBED BY GENERAL
SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
REG. 3-IV-302

RECORDS SHELF LIST

FROM (Name of agency)

Bureau of Special Revenue

ADDRESS OF AGENCY

Special Revenue Bldg.,
Washington 25, D. C.

AGENCY WHICH CREATED RECORDS

Bureau of Special Revenue

TOTAL NO. OF CONTAINERS

1607

FRC ACCESSION NO.

RECORD GROUP NO.

DATE

1/8/53

AGENCY CONTAINER NO.	FRC CONTAINER NO.	DESCRIPTION AND DATE
		<u>Sales Tax Ruling File. 1918-Aug. 15, 1952.</u>
		File of former Sales Tax Division, Excise Tax Unit, containing rulings, advisory opinions, memoranda, correspondence on routine sales tax collection matters with the public, reports of delinquency and collections. Rulings concern not only general policy but also decisions in individual cases. Includes case files on routine tax investigations.
1.		A - Aceb Not scheduled
2.		Acec - Acez
3.		Acf - Ado
...		...
		<u>Sales Tax Ruling File, Collectors File 1918-Aug. 15, 1952.</u>
407.		A - Bu Not scheduled
408.		Bu - Co
...		...
		<u>Sales Tax Claims for Credit. 1918-Aug. 15, 1952.</u>
503-619		Closed claims by taxpayers for credits against future tax obligations. Claims develop as a result of rulings favorable to the taxpayer. Arranged alphabetically by name. BSR Sched. 27, Item 3
...		...
1607		<u>Miscellaneous Tax Ruling File. 1941-Aug. 15, 1952.</u>
		Not scheduled

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-58453-1

FIGURE 6

If records are security-classified, the description must include the degree of classification. If the classified materials are not specifically named or described, or if no security-classified information is revealed, the standard forms documenting the transfer do not need to be classified. Whenever actual security-classified information is revealed, however, the agency should stamp the transfer document involved with the highest security classification borne by the information.

Restrictions on Use of Records. Particular attention should be given to this item. The specific restrictions an agency imposes on the use of transferred records should rest on legal considerations or considerations of the public interest. All restrictions dealing with access to the records will be rigidly enforced by the Center.

Coverage of Records by Disposal Schedules. To enable the Center to make proper and economical disposition of transferred records, you should specifically indicate what records are scheduled for disposal and the approved agency or general schedules which cover them. Even though such schedules authorize the disposal of your records after a specified date or the meeting of certain conditions, the Center will always secure your approval before it disposes of the records.

STANDARD FORM 134, RECORDS SHELF LIST

Description of Records. The description on this form should be broken down by individual records series. For each series the title and the inclusive dates should be given. If the title is not self-explanatory additional information must be included. Immediately following the title line or the explanatory paragraph, cite the disposition authority by schedule and item numbers.

A records series consists of documents, volumes, or folders that are arranged under a single filing system or are kept together as a unit because they relate to a particular subject, result from the same activity, or have a particular form. A series may consist of a single folder or of hundreds of feet of files; volume is not a factor. As a practical matter, single folders and similar small volumes of records may at times be lumped together into an artificially created series with a title indicating the general nature of the records, but such descriptions are much less useful for servicing records.

Each records series needs to be described only once. If a series fills several boxes, a breakdown of the chronological, numerical, or alphabetical coverage of each box should be given whenever necessary to facilitate future reference service on the records. In such breakdowns, the file designations (filing symbol, name, number, or date) of the first and last folders or documents within each box are usually sufficient. Any evident gaps in the series should be indicated.

The description of each series should include much the same kind of information that is included in the generalized description for the total transfer on Standard Form 135. In addition, information should be included on (a) the physical type and form, for example, sound recordings, maps, tabulating cards, correspondence, directives, estimates, reports, inquiries, instructions, memoranda, orders, summaries, or vouchers, and (b) internal organization or arrangement, for example, alphabetical, numerical, chronological, or classified system such as Dewey-decimal. Figure 6 shows a sample description of a series.

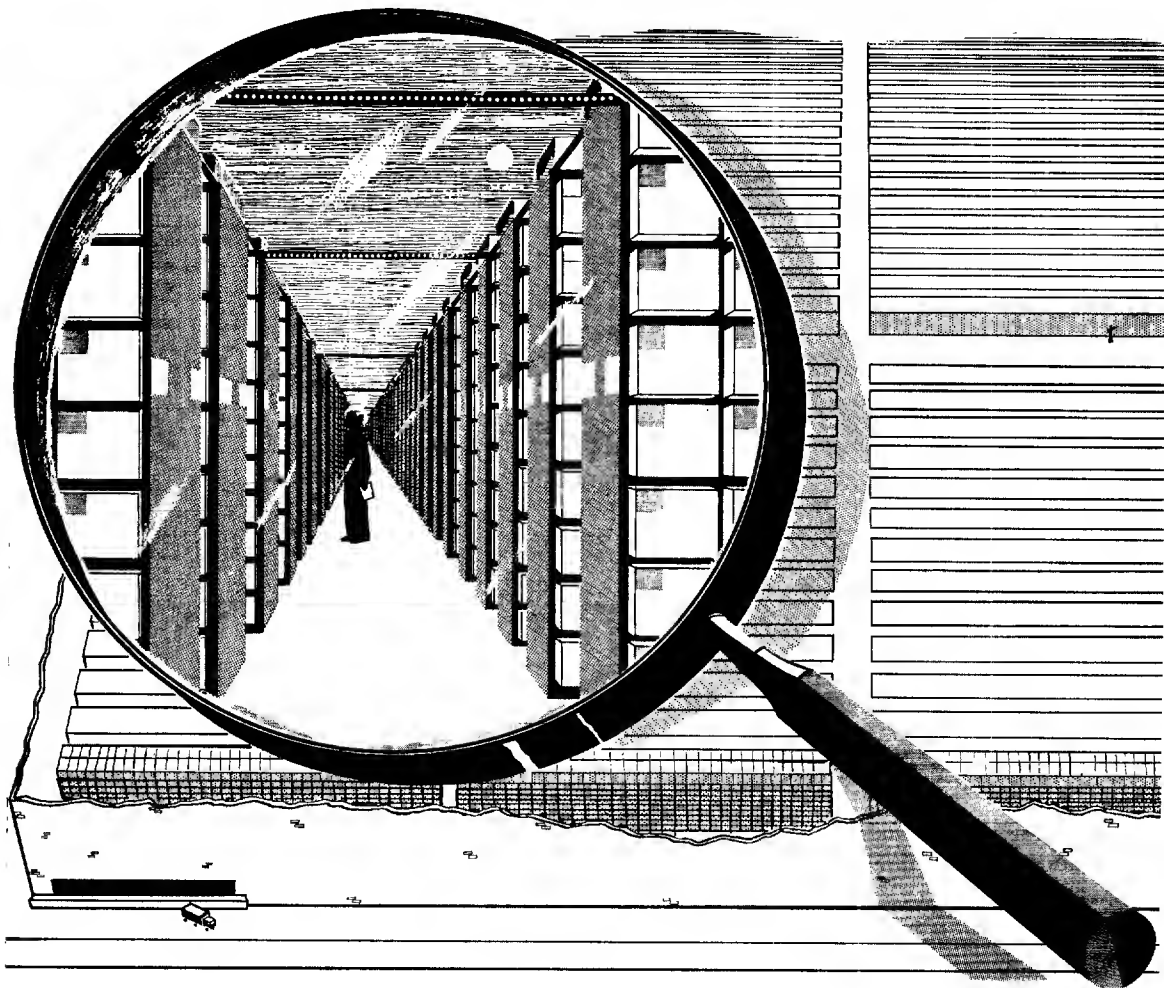
An index or other finding aid is itself a series and should be carefully described.

If the records are security-classified, the degree of classification must be given on Standard Form 134. The same principles of classification apply to this form as to Standard Form 135 (see above).

Agency Container Number. As has been indicated, boxes should be numbered consecutively. If a series description applies to the records in several boxes and there is no further box-by-box breakdown, the inclusive box numbers should be entered; for example, 29-41. If by chance a box number is skipped during packing, the agency should still enter that number on the Records Shelf List, with the statement "No box." It is essential that the container numbers on Standard Form 134 be accurate and correspond exactly with the numbers on the boxes.

FRC Container Number. This column on Standard Form 134 should be left blank. The Center will assign and fill in Center storage location space numbers. These numbers will be noted on the copy of the form the Center returns to an agency.

INTERIOR VIEW OF A TYPICAL RECORDS CENTER



VI. HOW TO SHIP THE RECORDS

Obviously, the most economical means available should be used to move files to Records Centers. If they are to be moved only a short distance, trucks owned by the Center will usually pick them up. In any case, if the agency so requests, the Center will assist in making the necessary transportation arrangements.

When Center trucks are not used, shipment may be made by parcel post, freight, or express.

Shipments by parcel post should be sent registered mail.

To get special tariff rates for Government records, shippers using commercial carriers should put the following statement on bills of lading and shipping orders:

"The agreed or declared value of the property is hereby specifically stated by the shipper to be not exceeding 3-1/2 cents per pound."

This statement entitles the shipper to special tariff rates for Government records.

When records are shipped by rail and there is sufficient weight for a carload, they should be loaded as heavily as possible. Railroads have two weight minimums: a 30,000-pound minimum for which 4th-class rates prevail, and a 40,000-pound minimum for which 5th-class rates prevail. Commercial trucks have a minimum weight of 20,000 pounds for special rates.

The following yardsticks may be useful in planning the movement of records:

One Center box holds 1 cubic foot of records and weighs 30 pounds.

One ton of records equals 70 cubic feet.

One empty filing cabinet weighs 150 pounds if steel; 105 pounds if wood.

One 40-foot tractor-trailer will transport 1,600 cubic feet of records.

One cubic foot equals 3,000 letter-size sheets of paper.

One cubic foot equals 10,000 tabulating punch cards.

If records are forwarded in file cabinets or transfer cases the agency must indicate in item 11 of Standard Form 135, Transmittal of Government Records, how many cabinets or cases, if any, it wants returned. The Center packs records received in file equipment in regular Center boxes and either returns the equipment to the transferring agency or turns it over to the Federal Supply Service, whichever the transferring agency desires. If the agency does not want the file equipment returned, it should prepare Standard Form 120, Report of Excess Personal Property, so that the Center can dispose of the equipment.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICE REQUEST FOR SERVICE				RETURN TO FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER	
TYPE OF SERVICE REQUESTED (Check one)					
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION		<input type="checkbox"/> DOCUMENT		<input type="checkbox"/> RESEARCH	
AGENCY			ADDRESS		
INDIVIDUAL	ROOM NUMBER	EXTENSION	RECORD GROUP NUMBER		
DATE	SEARCHER'S INITIALS	NO RECORD			
		MISSING FROM			
		TO			
		CHARGED TO			
		BUILDING AND ROOM NUMBER			
		DATE			
DESCRIPTION					
REQUEST RECEIVED BY					DATE

52-3383 GPO-O-GSA 308 GSA FORM 257a
October 1951

FIGURE 7

VII. HOW TO GET REFERENCE SERVICE

Agency officials can get quick and reliable reference service on records transferred to a Federal Records Center by requesting the service in whatever way is most convenient—by telephone, in writing (as by a letter or form), by messenger, or by personal call.

The requester may ask for information from the records, for photographs of them, for authenticated copies, or for the loan or return of the records themselves. No reference service will be honored, however, if it conflicts with restrictions established by the transferring agency. And no telephone information may be given on records with a security classification of confidential or higher.

In making a reference request specify:

1. The name of the agency and the name and location of the person for whom the request is being made;
2. The accession number of the particular transfer in which the records were included, as shown on the agency copy of Standard Form 135, Transmittal of Government Records;
3. A description of the information and/or records desired; and
4. The number of the Records Center box in which the records will probably be found, if it is possible to determine it from the copy of Standard Form 134, Records Shelf List, that was returned by the Center when the records were transferred.

By giving the Center the accession number and the Federal Records Center container number, the agency greatly facilitates the Center's search for the records.

When requests for service are received in writing or by telephone, the Center normally supplies the requested service within 24 hours.

No special form is needed to make written requests for Center reference service, although agencies wishing to do so may obtain and use GSA Form 257a, Request for Service. The Center will be glad to supply copies of this form, which is shown in Figure 7. The form is primarily designed for Center use; therefore an agency using it should ignore the irrelevant items.

Some agencies find it desirable to require all telephone or written requests to be made by, or channeled through, one or two persons in the agency. The names of such persons should be given to the Center.

The Center delivers requested records to "out-of-town customers" by regular United States mail, observing all necessary security requirements in doing so. If an office is in the same metropolitan area as the Center, however, the Center can deliver requested records or information by regular mail, by regular daily Center-operated "Archival Messenger Service," or by Center special delivery service. The last is used only if the need is urgent.

An agency should make general arrangements with the Center as to the normal type of delivery service to be provided. As a rule of thumb, when time is not important, it is more economical for the Center to send small amounts of records by regular mail. When deliveries are to be made by Archival Messenger Service, it is desirable for the agency to designate a single agency delivery point, such as the agency mail room, and to inform the Center of such delivery point.

Messengers sent to a Center to pick up requested records or information or agency officials who make personal visits to a Center for reference service purposes must always provide:

1. Clear identification;
2. Evidence of security clearance, if needed; and
3. Authorization to refer to records if their use is restricted.

Records may be requested for loan or permanent withdrawal. If on loan, the records may be retained as long as an agency desires. The Center exercises a limited follow-up control only if the agency requests such service, or if the records are of permanent value.

If information is sought rather than the records themselves, it is important to remember that Centers can only report findings of fact as stated in the records. Centers cannot provide interpretations and should not be requested to do so. If interpretations are needed, whenever practicable the relevant documents or copies of them will be furnished to permit the interpretation to be made by the requesting individual or agency.

Photo-reproductions of records can be furnished only if such reproduction is not contrary to agency restrictions, security requirements, or statutory restrictions. For example, there is a legal prohibition against the reproduction of naturalization papers. Centers will do microfilming only on a reimbursable basis. Charges also will be made for photo-reproductions involving an excessive expenditure of Center resources or unusual technical problems. A request involving more than 10 pages of photo-reproductions may be considered excessive if the agency concerned has its own reproduction facilities.

VIII. DISPOSAL OF RECORDS IN THE CENTERS

The transfer of records to Federal Records Centers is not a substitute for disposal. Rather it goes hand in hand with disposal. Experience has shown that Centers speed up disposal of records.

Disposition activities at Federal Records Centers have three major objectives:

1. To assist the National Archives and Records Service in identifying the records of enduring value of departmental and field activities of the Federal Government;
2. To assist Federal agencies in establishing retention periods for records that do not have enduring value; and
3. To remove from Federal Records Centers all disposable records promptly, always with agency concurrence, regardless of whether record or nonrecord material is involved.

If these three objectives are maintained, there will be few records in any Center marked "Disposal date not established," or "Retain indefinitely."

In accordance with GSA Regulations 3-IV-302.06, no record material can be disposed of without the agency's written concurrence, even though Congress has authorized the disposal. Such concurrence is received from the records-creating agency, the records-transferring agency, or any responsible successor agency, whichever is applicable.

If the records-creating or records-transferring agency is discontinued after the records are received in the Center and no agency succeeds to its functions or is entrusted with its liquidation, approval for the disposal of the records is obtained from the Records Management Division, National Archives and Records Service.

The Center likewise obtains agency approval for the disposal of nonrecord material in order that there will be no misunderstanding as to the record or non-record nature of particular files.

Before disposing of any records, the Center fills out and sends the agency concerned GSA Form 439, Report of Disposition of Records (See Figure 8). The agency then determines whether the authorization for disposal is still in effect, and whether the records are active enough to warrant keeping them longer. The relation between the volume of the records, shown in item 4 of Form 439, and the number of current requests for reference service has a direct bearing on the decision as to whether they should be kept. For example, 6 requests for service in 1 year on 6,000 cubic feet of records, would provide little justification for keeping them longer.

If the agency approves the disposition, it signs Form 439 and returns it to the center as authority for disposal action.

1(a) RECORDS OF		2. SCHEDULED DISPOSITION		3. RECORD GROUP NO.		4. VOLUME(Cu. Ft.)	
1(b) MAJOR SUBDIVISION				5. ACCESSION NO.		6. DISPOSITION JOB NO.	
1(c) MINOR SUBDIVISION				7. PAC CONTAINER NOS.			
8. INCLUSIVE DATES		9. CURRENT REFERENCE REQUEST					
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES (Explain on reverse)					
10. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS							
11. AUTHORIZATION FOR DISPOSITION				12. METHOD OF DISPOSITION			
				<input type="checkbox"/> BURNING <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSFERRED TO _____ <input type="checkbox"/> SALE AS WASTEPAPER <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Explain on reverse)			
13. DISPOSITION APPROVED BY (Agency)		DATE		14. DISPOSITION ACCOMPLISHED BY (Center)		DATE	
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE GSA-WASH DC 54-3074				REPORT OF DISPOSITION OF RECORDS			
				GSA FORM 439 September 1953			

FIGURE 8

If a field office authorizes disposal of records under existing schedules, but does not know whether necessary clearance with the General Accounting Office has been obtained, the Center, before disposing of the records, requests clearance from the Records Management Division, National Archives and Records Service.

IX. THE ST. LOUIS FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER

The General Services Administration maintains at 1724 Locust Street, St. Louis 3, Missouri, a Federal Records Center for all personnel and pay records of former civilian employees of the Federal Government. Because of the specialized nature of this Center, transferring records to it and getting reference service from it require some special procedures.

Each Federal agency should transfer the following three types of records to the Center at St. Louis:

1. Official Personnel Folders of separated employees and comparable files accumulated before Official Personnel Folders were established;
2. Service Record Cards (Standard Form 7 or its equivalent) of separated or transferred employees; and
3. Individual Earnings and Service Cards (such as Standard Form 1127 or its equivalent) or Comprehensive Payrolls or Individual Pay Folders.

Personnel Folders. Civil Service Commission Regulations (Title 5, Administrative Personnel, Part 28, Code of Federal Regulations) require that Official Personnel Folders of persons who have been separated from the Federal service for 1 year be transferred to the Federal Records Center, St. Louis. Military agencies are required, however, to transfer similar records within 30 days after the separation of their civilian employees.

When an employee is separated from an agency, the agency should take these steps in regard to his Official Personnel Folder:

1. Remove it from the active file.
2. Examine all the documents in it to ensure that all the permanent ones are on the right-hand side.
3. Remove and destroy the temporary material on the left-hand side.
4. Record the date of separation in pencil on the face of the tab of the folder, for example: S-9/30/54.
5. File the folder alphabetically in an inactive file.
6. Once a month, in civil agencies, screen the file and remove, for transmittal to the St. Louis Center, the folders of employees who have been separated for a year.

To make the screening easier, metal signal tabs, marked with the name of the month, may be placed on the folder tab to indicate the month the folder should be transferred to the Federal Records Center. Each office may determine whether the use of the signal tabs is warranted—perhaps using a criterion of whether it has 50 or more inactive folders. After the folders have been pulled, the tabs may be removed and used again.

In the military agencies, the entire inactive file is transferred at the end of each month.

Unless the quantity of folders is too great, they may be placed in a penalty envelope for mailing to the St. Louis Center. Parcel post is recommended for larger quantities.

A transmittal memorandum similar to Figure 9 should be forwarded to the St. Louis Center with the records. The folders do not need to be listed by name, since their transfer is noted on the corresponding Service Record Cards. To avoid an unwarranted drain on its manpower the Center does not acknowledge receipt of records sent it.

Federal Records Center
1724 Locust Street
St. Louis 3, Missouri

Transmitted herewith are _____ official personnel
(No.)
folders of former Federal employees who separated from the
Agency during _____, _____ .
(Month) (Year)

Signed _____

Title _____

Agency _____

Address _____

Encl:

FIGURE 9

Before sending the folders to the Center, the agency should make every effort to find and place in the folders any pertinent papers that are held elsewhere in its offices. If stray documents are found later, they should be sent to the Center with a separate copy of Standard Form 127, Request for Official Personnel Folder, for each individual involved. (See Figure 10.) When this form is used for transmitting loose papers, blocks 2, 4, 5, and 6c should be filled out. The date of the person's separation must be entered in block 5.

The personnel office can be of material assistance to medical offices holding industrial health records by informing them of a transfer of personnel records. The information, including the names of the individuals whose folders are being transferred, should be given to a medical office at least a week before shipment.

To request a folder from the St. Louis Center, use Standard Form 127, mentioned above. A separate form, in duplicate, should be completed for each individual whose personnel folder is desired. A memorandum in lieu of Standard Form 127 should be used to request *information* from the folders.

Service Record Cards. Standards governing the transfer of Service Record Cards, or their equivalent, are proposed in General Records Schedule No. 1, item 2.

Upon transfer or separation of an employee, an agency will remove his Service Record Card from the Service Control File, prescribed in the United States Civil Service Commission's Handbook S-812, and place it alphabetically in a vertical inactive file. This inactive file should be broken every 5 years, and by the time the second file is to be closed and a third one established, the first can be sent to the Federal Records Center, St. Louis. In this way Service Record Cards will be retained from 5 to 10 years after separation of an employee, and cards sent to the St. Louis Center in 5-year blocks.

The St. Louis Center will not lend Service Record Cards in its custody except to the transferring agency. Photocopies will be provided upon request, however.

Fiscal records relating to pay. The St. Louis Center will accept IER cards, comprehensive payrolls, or individual fiscal folders as outlined in General Records Schedule No. 2. Such records should be transferred 1 year after completion of the audit. They are used to provide service record data when the Official Personnel Folder is missing or incomplete.

Shipment should be made in standard Federal Records Center cardboard cartons, described in Part IV, obtainable from the nearest Center or Annex. Standard Forms 134 and 135 (see Part V) should be used to transmit fiscal records and to inventory them.

Fiscal records sent to the St. Louis Center will not be merged with the Official Personnel Folder nor transferred to another agency. Photocopies will be provided as needed, however.

<small>STANDARD FORM 127 APRIL 1952 PRESCRIBED BY GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REG. 3-IV-302</small>	REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FOLDER (SEPARATED EMPLOYEE)	1. DATE OF REQUEST
Submit in duplicate to the Federal Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.		
SECTION I—TO BE COMPLETED BY REQUESTING OFFICE		
General Services Administration Records Management Service, Region 6 Federal Records Center 1724 Locust Street St. Louis 3, Mo.		
2. NAME (Last, first, middle)	3. NAME UNDER WHICH FORMERLY EMPLOYED FEDERALLY (If other than item 2)	4. DATE OF BIRTH
5. FORMER FEDERAL EMPLOYING OFFICE (Agency, bureau or equivalent, address, and dates of employment)		
(If formerly employed by agencies in addition to above, list under item 7)		
6. PERSONNEL FOLDER ACTION (Check appropriate box)		
<input type="checkbox"/> a. CURRENTLY EMPLOYED. REQUEST TRANSMISSION OF FOLDER COVERING PREVIOUS FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT FOR PERMANENT RETENTION	<input type="checkbox"/> b. REQUEST TRANSMISSION OF FOLDER FOR TEMPORARY USE	<input type="checkbox"/> c. CONSOLIDATE ATTACHED PAPERS WITH OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FOLDER PREVIOUSLY FORWARDED
7. REMARKS		
SECTION II—FOR USE BY FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER, ST. LOUIS, MO.		
8. <input type="checkbox"/> a. CONSOLIDATE ATTACHED PAPERS WITH FOLDER PREVIOUSLY FORWARDED <input type="checkbox"/> b. FOLDER ENCLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> c. FOLDER NOT LOCATED	<input type="checkbox"/> d. FLAGGED, FOLDER TO BE FORWARDED WHEN LOCATED <input type="checkbox"/> e. FOLDER PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED IS ENCLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> f. FOLDER FORWARDED ON A LOAN BASIS IN LIEU OF INFORMATION REQUESTED. IF EMPLOYEE IS REHIRED, FOLDER SHOULD BE RETAINED BY YOUR AGENCY	
9. REMARKS		
NOTE.—Original will be used as charge-out by Federal Records Center. Duplicate will be returned as transmittal sheet when appropriate.		
TO: ADDRESS: ATTN:	Requesting agency will type name and address of office submitting request in address box. To be used to mail folder or reply.	
<small>U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-60897-1</small>		

FIGURE 10

CHECK LIST

The questions are so worded that check marks in the "NO" column indicate the need for corrective action.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Has your agency designated a records management liaison office with the General Services Administration in accordance with GSA Regulations, Title 3, Section 102.06? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Are all of the records of your agency covered by records disposition instructions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Do the records disposition instructions of your agency indicate what records should be transferred to Federal Records Centers, and when? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Does your agency make certain that "record copies" of all issuances and publications are made a part of the official files before the files are transferred to a Federal Records Center? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Are "desk drawer files" or "personal collections" scrutinized for record material to be incorporated in official files before the files are transferred to a Federal Records Center? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Does your agency utilize the knowledge and experience of staff members of the Federal Records Centers in making transfers of records to those Centers? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. If your agency undergoes on-site audit by the General Accounting Office, does it follow General Regulations 115 of the Comptroller General insofar as using a Federal Records Center is concerned? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Does your agency screen records before packing them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Does your agency include finding aids in transfers of records? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Does your agency document all transfers to Federal Records Centers by Standard Form 135, Transmittal of Government Records? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Does your agency also prepare Standard Form 134, Records Shelf List? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. When your agency requests reference service, does it give the Center box number and accession number? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Does your agency transfer to the Federal Records Center, St. Louis, Official Personnel Folders of separated employees <i>monthly</i> 1 year after separation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Does your agency use Standard Form 127, Request for Official Personnel Folder, to request service from the St. Louis Center? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Does your agency send appropriate fiscal records to the St. Louis Center each year? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Has your agency also transferred its older Service Record Cards to the St. Louis Center? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Washington: 1954